

## 50+ Water Baptism Related Events

Those who have marginalized water baptism, have deprived countless numbers of people from the blessings and benefits of proper Biblical baptism.

Recently a notion has developed, that nothing actually happens at the point of receiving water baptism. This was not the predominant historical view, nor is it a Biblical perspective.

Some have a notion that baptism is merely a symbol, or ceremony, in which nothing actually happens or transpires. Further, that baptism is a fairly insignificant and an optional event. Based on such fallacies, some reason that how or whether, one is baptized, is a non-issue.

But, in the following list of fifty plus (50+) things (arranged in 28 categories), which: happen, occur, or change, upon receiving immersion (as a final step of conversion), we will see that baptism is much more, than a meaningless ceremony of low or no import. Keep in mind that this is but a partial list of things that happen and change in such a case.

Let us briefly take a high level look at some of the effects of water baptism. Subsequent to: belief, repentance, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost, and upon receiving water baptism; the following things change, or occur at baptism:

(Note: Items in quotes “ ”, in the list below, are direct quotes from the Bible. Also, be aware that the items in this list were extracted from the detailed list of baptismal happenings (shortly to follow, within this same chapter). If the reader questions anything in this brief list, please carefully consult the detailed listing of 18 categories of things that happen/ change at baptism. )

1. God does many things (Divine action): Justifies, sanctifies (1 Corinthians 6:11), seals (Romans 4:11), applies grace (1 Corinthians 1:14), absolves sin (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16), etc.
2. Jesus' blood is spiritually applied to our soul (The passover lamb's blood had to not only be shed, but applied, in order for one to be delivered from death).
3. Sins are: remitted (paid for), forgiven, and washed away, **for the first time**. (Acts 2:38, Luke 24:47). **IN** Christ → through water baptism, is linked to “forgiveness of sins” (Ephesians 1:7, and Colossians 1:14). We are “freed from sin” (Romans 6:7).
4. Our sins no longer prevent us from entering heaven, and partaking of the Tree of Life (Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:7-8, 22:14-15; John 3:5ff, Colossians 2:12).
5. Old Sinful Nature is “cut off” (Ephesians chapter 2; Colossians 2:11-12), “old self is crucified”, we are “dead to sin” (Romans 6:2-11), we are “no longer slaves to sin” (1 Corinthians 15:55-56).
6. We are baptized into Christ's death. “We died with Christ” (Romans 6:3,6 “baptized into his death”).
7. We receive the required (“everlasting covenant” Genesis 17:13), spiritual circumcision (Ephesians chapter 2; Colossians 2:11-12; ).
8. Baptism is the beginning of life in Christ (TNDNTT) by Colin Brown Vol. 1, pg 147): We arise to newness of life (Colossians 2:11-12; Romans 6:4 NIV). We become alive to God in Christ.”
9. We get a new godly nature (Ephesians chapter 2).
10. We get a good conscience (1 Peter 3:20-21). (A clean slate, and a new beginning, if-you-will.)
11. Jesus Christ's name is called upon us (James 2:7; Acts 15:17).
12. We are delivered from: Death, Devil, Hell, and perdition (James 5:20; Acts 26:18).
13. We become a New Creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).
14. We share in Christ's ability to abstain from sin (as Christ after resurrection was immune).
15. Conversion, Salvation (2 Timothy 2:10; Ephesians 1:3; Acts 2:41), Regeneration, and Atonement happens.
16. Our status and identity changes. We are: converted, saved, born again (John 3:3ff), added to the church (Acts 2:41), a child of God, part of the bride of Christ (Romans 7:4; Revelation 21:9, Revelation 22:17; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Matthew 25:1-46), we are kings and priests (Revelation 1:6), Abraham's seed, heirs, (Galatians 3:29), part of the spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:12), no longer strangers and aliens (Ephesians 2:19), become Jesus' disciple (John 8:31), and Christian.
17. We enter the: “Kingdom of Heaven” (John 3:3ff; Revelation 1:6). “Church”, “Body of Christ” (1 Peter 2:10), New Covenant.

18. We “put on” Christ, and are “put in” Christ (Galatians 3:27). We are then, “IN Christ” (Galatians 3:27), and “in the faith” (1 Corinthians 12:27).
19. In Union With Christ (Romans 6:5). We have fellowship with Christ.
20. We become His sheep, and “disciple indeed” (John 8:31), and we now hear Jesus' voice.
21. All Christ's spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3) are now available to us, including the promise of resurrection, and Heaven (Romans 6:5,9; Galatians 3:29; Romans 6:1-11).
22. We get the new privilege of being able to daily repent, and get forgiven (1 John 1:9).
23. We get a change of Lordship, and ownership (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; 1 Peter 2:9)(we become a portable, purchased, treasure).
24. Jesus becomes our God.
25. Jesus becomes our protector, “we cross the waters to safety” (1 Corinthians 10:1ff; 1 Peter 3:19-21).
26. We get sealed, we get the Covenant Token, which can be visibly seen (Romans 4:11, Genesis 17:10ff).
27. Baptizer obeys God's Word, and The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; etc)
28. The Baptized party is obedient to: God's Word, “the faith”, and “the gospel” (2 Thessalonians 1:8; Romans 1:5, 10:16, 16:26; John 3:36).

It is awe inspiring to contemplate that all of those wonderful things happen, and that such great benefits (and more) become available at the point of Biblical water baptism. Why would anyone discourage someone from being Biblically water baptized? Let us look at a more detailed list of the happenings at the point of water baptism, and benefits, both of water baptism, and after such.

The following is a partial list of what actually happens at the point of receiving water baptism (arranged in 18 categories, this time).

**1. The baptized party identifies with Christ's death, and burial** Romans 6:3-11 v3 “baptized into His death” notice the connection between: baptism → into His death → then we are dead to sin. Verse 4 speaks of being buried with Jesus in baptism into Christ's death. (Side Note: It does NOT say buried with “THEM”, it says buried with Christ. Nor does the Bible speak of being buried with the “Father”, nor the “Holy Ghost” per se. So, why would anyone think rightly of invoking the words “Father”, and “Holy Ghost” in water baptism?) We see here the connection between death, and baptism. When we are baptized we identify with Jesus death. “When you came to Christ, you were “circumcised,” but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure--the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.” Colossians 2:11-12 (NLT)

“We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Romans 6:4 (NIV)

**2. Our sins are: remitted (paid for), forgiven, and washed away in water baptism (Originally, and for the first time.)** (After conversion, including water baptism, the saint obtains sin forgiveness according to the terms mentioned in 1 John 1:9. **Warning:** No one can obtain sin forgiveness, originally and for the first time, by the provisions of 1 John 1:9. One must first be converted, or born again- including water baptism. In case this is a new concept, the two chapters of this writing titled: “The Original Salvation Plan”, and “Full or Partial Conversion” discuss in more detail exactly what is included in Biblical conversion. That should help Biblically explain why baptism is part of conversion. )

The whole issue of the sin/disobedience problem and atonement/justification (or sin's remedy) have always been at the heart of the issue of separation from God. Since all have gotten sin on, and in our lives, the question is “How do we get rid of this sin for the very first time?” Let us see what the Scriptures have to say.

Acts 2:38 “...be baptized for the remission of sins...”

Some argue that the word translated “for” can also mean “because”. They use examples such as, “A man is thrown in jail for the commission of a crime - he is thrown in jail because he committed it”, to support such reasoning. They reason that such is the meaning of the term “for” found in Acts 2:38. They reason that a man is immersed for the remission (forgiveness) of sins - a man is immersed “because” his sins are remitted (forgiven).

In Acts 2:38 the term translated “for” is the Greek word “eis”, which rarely ever means “because”, and certainly not in this context. Contrary to the critic's assertions, 54 versions of the Bible DO NOT translate the word “for”, in Acts 2:38, as “because”. That fact alone should be enough proof to debunk critic's assertions. But, we will further consider this issue anyway. Let us look at Matthew 26:28. In this verse, where Jesus is instituting the Lord's

Supper, He describes His blood as being shed “for the forgiveness of sins.” The whole verse reads, “For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many **for** the remission of sins.” Nobody (who believes that the Bible is the Word of God) would claim that Jesus shed His blood “because mankind’s sins were already forgiven.” It is obvious Jesus’ blood was shed for the purpose of providing for the forgiveness of mankind’s sins! For that same purpose, and using exactly the same language (in Greek as well as in English), forgiveness of sins is ascribed to immersion!

*[Dr Marvin Treece, “Causal sense” Arndt Gingrich Lexicon) They repented at the preaching of John, they did not repent in order to get John to preach, they repented because John preached, and they then repented. Dr Treece says there are several other terms that could have been used, but were not. “at” the preaching of John. Prepositions are NOT used in a causal sense. They are never used in another way.]*

Let us look at some Scripture texts that also help us understand that forgiveness of sins comes at the point of baptism:

Acts 22:16 “baptized...washing away your sins”. Obviously, one’s sins are washed away in baptism.

Colossians 2:13-15 “forgiven your trespasses ...blotting out the handwriting of ordinances” (context: baptism).

1 Peter 3:20-21 (baptism saves us...saved by water, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but a good conscience.)

Our sins were washed away when we were baptized, subsequently we have a clear conscience before God.

Acts 10:43 “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”

Jesus’ name and remission of sins being two important aspects of baptism, to which this verse refers.

John 20:31 KJV “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life [*i.e. eternal life*] through his name.” (Note: ESV, NIV, etc. says “life in his name”).

John 3:15 NIV “that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” NASB “so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.”

John 3:15 KJV “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Luke 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Romans 3:23 “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”

1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. [Some take this to be referring to baptism].

1 Corinthians 6:11 (NIV) “But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ [context is baptism] and by the Spirit of our God.” Many take the phrase, “the name of Jesus Christ” here to be referring to Jesus’ name being invoked in baptism, to justify by the washing away of sins.

Notice all the above references to being “in him”, meaning “IN Christ”, and “IN his name”. Remember, the way we get “IN Christ”, is by means of water baptism, in Jesus’ name. Connect the dots. We get IN Christ, and IN Christ’s name by means of water baptism, in Jesus’ name. We also receive “remission of sins”, by being baptized in Jesus’ name, as proven many times in this writing. All of these concepts are involved in water baptism in Jesus’ name. An important “take away” lesson, and warning, is that people who do not receive water baptism, do NOT get: eternal life, nor remission of sins, nor do they get into Christ and into Christ’s name.

Titus 3:5 speaks of being saved by the “washing of regeneration” which many believe is referring to baptism.

The New Dictionary of New Testament Theology (TNDNTT) by Colin Brown Vol. 1, pg 147

“In Titus 3:5 and John 3:5 baptism is associated with regeneration”

Sins being washed away in baptism was even alluded to in Old Testament Bible prophecy.

Ezekiel 36:23-28 “And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. v24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. v25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness [ ← **alluding to baptism**], and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. v26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. v27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. 28 . . . and you shall be my people and I will be your God.” [Cf. Romans 2.29] The main part is Ezekiel 36:25-28 “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean . . . A new heart I will give

you, and a new spirit I will put within you . . . and you shall be my people, and I will be your God”.

Ephesians 5:25-27 “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

When an individual is immersed into Christ, he is immersed into Christ’s death. It was in Christ’s death that His blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins (John 19:31-37). When we are immersed into Christ’s death we contact the blood, which washes away our sins.

Ephesians 1:7 “**In** whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” Colossians 1:14 “**In** whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”

Some may not readily understand how that Ephesians 1:7, and Colossians 1:14 support the idea that forgiveness of sins comes through water baptism. If we focus on the first part of the verses we see the phrase “**IN** whom”, meaning “**IN** Christ”. These two verses are saying that we have forgiveness of sins **IN** Christ. This is important because before we were **IN** Christ, our sins were NOT forgiven. Keep in mind that Jesus blood was already shed, and Christ's work was finished, but we still did NOT have our sins under His blood, and forgiven. So, this begs the question, what makes the difference? What causes us to be both **IN** Christ, and our sins forgiven (originally and for the first time)? The answer is found in Galatians 3:27-29. We find out that we put on Christ and we get **INTO** Christ through water baptism in Jesus' name. So, connecting the dots, we understand that God's Word is telling us that we get our sins forgiven when we get **INTO** Christ through water baptism. This being the case, Ephesians 1:7, and Colossians 1:14, indeed support the idea that forgiveness of sins comes through water baptism. (For more discussion on the concept of “In Christ”, look at number 7 (below)).

This is the reason our sins can be, and are, washed away at baptism. Because, by God's design, baptism is when **Christ's blood is originally applied, to cleanse us**. In order to fully understand this, one needs to review the following Scriptures and Bible concepts.

Christ paid the price for the forgiveness of our sins on Calvary. It is true that nothing, and no one, can add to Christ's finished work. Jesus Himself said “It is finished” (John 19:30). However, if everyone were automatically saved by default; why does the Bible repeatedly tell us that there will be more lost than saved? Why does it tell us of people who thought they would be saved, but as part of the end time judgment, they find out that they are not saved (Matthew 7:13-14)?

The answer is because, by God's design, mankind has to “identify with Christ's finished work” and “obey the gospel” (Romans 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8). In other words, God paid the price so that our sins can be remitted, but we still have to take delivery so-to-speak, by getting baptized in obedience to God's Word. One way we can see how this works is, by looking at Bible typology (also see the chapter, within this writing, that deals further with typology).

God started the pattern of shedding **AND** applying blood in order to avoid death in the Garden of Eden. The animal was viciously and violently slain, and the bloody skins were put on Adam and Eve as a covering and a substitute offering for their sin. As such, they were delivered from instant death.

The trend of applying blood continues in the First Testament. The whole story of the Israelites coming out of Egypt is an: actual, factual, historical, series of events that are also typical of the process of our “church age” salvation process. For example, God performed 9 of the 10 plagues without the participation of the Israelites. But, God refused to perform the 10<sup>th</sup>, and final “delivering plague” without obedient Israelite participation. They had to kill a lamb and catch the drippings blood in a container. But, just shedding the lamb’s blood was not sufficient. They then were supposed to take a plant branch, called hyssop, and dip it into the blood, and smear blood on the side and top door posts, so that the death angel would pass over them, and not kill their firstborn. If they neglected to complete the last step, the death angel would have killed their firstborn.

In like fashion, Jesus shed His blood, but we still have to obey, and get the blood applied to our life through baptism, just as the Israelites had to apply the blood to the door posts, so that they, like we, can be spared death. So, we obey the Biblical **commands** to be baptized. That simple act of obedience applies Christ's blood to our lives, and cleanses us of all sin.

(Theologians have historically held to this view, that one must obediently receive water baptism in order to apply Christ's blood to one's soul, and receive forgiveness of sins. Again, the scope of this provision is limited to conversion and the first and original time that one receives forgiveness of sins. This is not referring to how one receives forgiveness of sins, after conversion.)

Scholarly references regarding baptism and remission of sins-

The New Dictionary of New Testament Theology (TNDNTT) by Colin Brown Vol. 1, pg 146

*“Luke's understanding of Christian baptism appears in Acts 2:38. Baptism is conversion-baptism... it is for 'forgiveness of sins'...” [and on page 148] “forgiveness of sins and cleansing from sins” [Cleansing, and forgiveness of sins is mentioned twice on pg 146, 3 times on pg 148, on page 150, and mentioned several more times pages 151-153. It is clear that scholarship acknowledges that cleansing from sins, and forgiveness of sins happens at the point of water baptism.]*

If the reader puts any significance in the so-called “Church Creeds”, it should be noted that the last few lines of the Nicene creed contains the phrase “We believe . . . in one baptism for the remission of sins”. Additionally, the Baptist confession of 1698 also acknowledges aspects of Biblical baptism, such as: Immersion, remission of sins, and the fact that baptism was/is an ordinance instituted by Christ. An ordinance is an authoritative order; a decree. Synonyms: edict, decree, law, injunction, command, order, rule, ruling, dictate, directive, mandate. The confession also acknowledges that another part of the function of baptism is the engrafting into Christ's body.

[http://www.blueletterbible.org/study/ccc/baptist/Of\\_Baptism.cfm](http://www.blueletterbible.org/study/ccc/baptist/Of_Baptism.cfm)

Remember, the warning found in 2 Thessalonians 1:8, that says the angels will take vengeance on those who obey not the gospel. Those who say there is nothing one can do, or not do, to affect or bring about their salvation are not only ignoring many Scriptures, but they are in direct opposition to virtually all theologians for about the first 1600 years of the church age.

**3. Our sinful nature is cut away, and we are circumcised (a type of circumcision of the heart), and a new nature comes in place of the old nature, at water baptism.** Spiritually speaking, baptism cuts away the old desire to sin, and gives us a new nature that desires to please God, and to turn away from sinful indulgences. The cutting away of this sinful nature, for the first time, gives us the opportunity to choose to please God in our daily choices.

Some challenge the idea that New Covenant, water baptism is in any way associated with Old Testament fleshly circumcision. Let us see.

Colossians 2:11-12 (KJV) 11 “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the **circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism**, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

One scholar elaborated on the above text saying that the semi colon means, the prior content is going to be explained by what follows. In this example “circumcision” is indeed linked to being “buried” in “baptism”, despite the number “12” being inserted there by translators in about the 13 century. Circumcision is textually equated with baptism here. If one is not baptized, they are also not in the New Covenant, just as circumcision was necessary in order to partake of the benefits of the Old Covenant. Here are a few more things to be sure to note: v11 “...putting off the body of the sins”, notice the context is baptism. Notice that baptism and circumcision are paralleled together here. Verse 13 says we are dead to sin, again we see that baptism helps us overcome our old nature.

For the concepts we are about to discuss, we will not supply a complete study, and list of proofs, but the concepts are non-the-less, true. A brief overview should be sufficient to help the reader to be able to study in the right direction. What we are about to cover is of utmost importance. In passages such as Genesis 17:13, it is revealed that circumcision is an “everlasting covenant”, and that it pre-dated the Mosaic Law. As such, just as circumcision was required prior to the Mosaic Law, it **IS** also **REQUIRED**, today (after the Mosaic Law). Many are confused about how this could be true, or how all of the pieces of the discussion fit together. Especially, because of the “popular” “sound-byte” New Testament passages, which are usually discussed regarding the topic of the “fleshly” circumcision. For example, many verses in the book of Galatians make it clear that a New Covenant believer is not required to receive the fleshly circumcision. Circumcision is, however, fulfilled in a little different way than in the Old Testament. Today, it is spiritually fulfilled through receiving water baptism. So, let us cover this one more time. Spiritual circumcision (water baptism) **IS** still required, while fleshly circumcision is NOT required. One cannot expect to abide in heaven, if one is not spiritually circumcised.

It seems a little silly to have to discuss a privilege of the magnitude of spiritual circumcision, in terms of something that one is required to do, or receive. It seems more proper to discuss spiritual circumcision in terms of a privilege that one is abundantly blessed to be able to obtain and receive. Such is true. But, because there are so many critics and enemies, which scream so loudly, against everything related to water baptism, one must make it

clear that if one does not receive water baptism, one cannot have eternal life. Otherwise, people will likely be duped into neglecting to receive, or snubbing, something that is absolutely, and critically necessary in order for one to be saved.

Not only is spiritual circumcision absolutely necessary simply by textual proofs, it is necessary for other reasons, functional, and practical reasons.

Think about all the implications of what spiritual circumcision cuts away, and the benefits, it helps one attain.

Romans 6:2-11 v2 “dead to sin” v3 “baptized into His death” notice the connection between baptism → into His death → then we are dead to sin. Verse 4 says buried with Jesus in baptism into Christ's death. Here again we see the connection between death, and baptism. This is how we identify with His death. Verse 6 tells us that when we take part in this death, “that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Again, the old nature is destroyed in order to destroy sin in one's life. Verse 7 “For he that is dead [baptized] is freed from sin.” “...knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him [*baptism*], that our body of sin might be done away with [sin nature cut off], that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin [*victorious over sin*]” “Now if we have died with Christ [baptism] we believe that we shall also live with Him [*Newness of life, and promise of resurrection*], knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him [*victorious over sin while on this Earth, and promise of eternal life*]” “For the death that He died, He died to sin [*we died to sin too, at baptism*], once for all, but the life that He lives, He lives to God [*we live to God in Newness of Life post-baptism*]. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:6-11 NASB).

Therefore a Christian is not a slave to sin - sin has no business telling him what to do anymore. Romans 6:11 this verse asks all to consider themselves as both dead to sin, and alive to God. The Christian can tell sin to “get lost,” as immersion has made him free from sin's power.

When Christ was resurrected the devil had no more that he could do to Him. The devil could not tempt Christ anymore. As a result of our sharing in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection through immersion, we are to consider ourselves just as removed from the power of sin as Jesus was when He burst forth from the grave! If we do not think of ourselves as being this way, it is a cinch that we will not even come close to acting that way.

Let us drill a little deeper into this aspect of the importance of a proper post-baptism christian mindset toward sin. If water baptism cuts off the old sin nature, for real and for sure; why did Paul seemingly have to coach the Romans, and sort-of give them a pep talk about it? Some would say, if it actually happened, they would not need any coaching, they would just naturally not sin anymore. Some Christians muse, and wonder if it is really that easy to stop sinning -post baptism. Is the key to success, and power over sin, as simple as considering or reckoning, one's self dead to sin? The answer is: “yes”.

We do not really have to sin, like we used to? True enough, the sin nature has been disconnected by baptism. We are no longer, sort of hard wired to sin. We are not connected, or bound anymore. We are still human though. Our bodies have not yet been redeemed. We can be reconnected.

Additionally, we are creatures of habit. We also deal with what some psychologist, and psychiatrists call “the house of the familiar”. Our old sinful ways are what we know. We have to keep in the forefront of our mind (“consider” and “reckon” ourselves dead to sin Romans 6:11) that we are no longer bound to have to sin. We are disconnected. The old sin nature has been cut off. We are dead to sin, and alive to Christ. We do not have to reach for sinful indulgences anymore. We are free to walk about in Christ unencumbered by sin's weights and attachments. However, we do have to make deliberate efforts to learn new ways of living, or we can fall right back into the old rut that was our life – just because it was familiar, not because we have to. We would do well to displace the old habits, and sinful ways with the new life, as quickly as possible. In this way we can maximize our triumphant life in God, and minimize failure. We have to learn a new procedure, to listen for God's still small voice that prompts us about what to, and not to do. We need to put our actions through the filter of God's Word, and sort of ask, what God's Word says about this situation. Instead of just counting to 10 before doing, or not doing something, we need to ask ourselves, “What would Jesus do?”. The best weapon to keep the flesh subjected to the will of God is to do what our supreme example did in order to accomplish the same thing – PRAY, and quote the Word when tempted.

Here is a word picture before we leave this topic. One that should help us all “consider” and “reckon” properly. In our mind's eye, let us see sort of a cartoon drawing of a dead man lying in his grave, 6 foot under the surface of the Earth. If the reader prefers, some may choose another view (word picture), such as a common funeral wake. With that thought in mind, let us consider a few questions. If anyone tells lies on the departed, will they be tempted to sin in any way? Like maybe to physically hurt them, or give them a piece of their mind? Let us look at

the picture again to determine the proper answers to these questions. The corpse is not moving. It is not responding in any way. Then, the answer is “no”. If someone repeatedly slapped the corpse on the face, would the corpse come alive and violently lash out? Answer: No. If a pretty lady walks by, will the dead be tempted to sin in any way? Answer: no. No matter what provocation, temptation, or event, this dead individual would not improperly respond, mostly because there is something not in them, that would possibly make the provocation effective. What is that one asks? Answer: Breath, blood, life, and such. In short it is not living. If we could see ourselves just as dead to the provocation of sin, we would do well. If that word picture came to mind every time, we were provoked, it would help us to properly reckon ourselves dead to sin.

Interestingly, Jesus spoke of Satan coming to tempt Him in the wilderness, but there were a combination of factors that made Jesus' successful outcome a forgone conclusion. A couple of those factors are these. Jesus said that Satan was coming and “he has nothing in Me” (John 14:30). Just as there was no breath, blood etc. in the corpse illustration we just discussed. Jesus had so maintained His life that there was no place for the sin to attach inside of Him. The sin and temptation could not get a rouse out of Him. The other factor was that Jesus' mindset was that He only does what He sees the Father do, and He does the works of the Father. As such: sinful, indulgent, selfish, responses were not included in the list of Jesus' optional reactions to provocation. Wow! To be like Jesus!

After we rise out of the waters of baptism, we can choose not to sin, and to live victoriously over sin. Because of that, death has no sting for us (1 Corinthians 15:55-56). When we pass from this life, Jesus is waiting for us there. Hallelujah!

**4. At baptism, our sins cannot prevent us from entering heaven, and eating of the Tree of Life.** Sin broke fellowship with God in Eden. That set a pattern that sin separates us from God. Since baptism does away with all that past sin, we can now have close fellowship with God. If one died right after being baptized, one's sins would not prevent one from entering into heaven. Galatians 5:19-21, John 3:5ff cannot enter the kingdom, nor go to heaven. Toward the end of the book of Revelation, there are several sections that clearly tell us that what one does, while alive, affects one's eternal destination. For example: Revelation 21:7-8; 22:14-15, gives similar lists of the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5. Additionally, the book of Revelation repeatedly speaks of the white clothes, and garments, which represent saint's right works, or actions. Revelation 22:14 says they had a right to the tree of life because they “did” or obeyed His commandments. God made provision for us to live above sinful disobedience, and get forgiveness if we fail. Since, sin's solution exists while we live, God will not allow sin into heaven.

**5. We identify with Jesus resurrection, and rise in newness of life.** Here we find that baptism comes with, no less than a two fold expectation. 1. An expectation of a new life while here on this Earth. 2. An expectation of a new eternal life, with Jesus, after this physical and temporal life is over.

Romans 6:5 is sharing with us that Christ rose, and how He rose, and the fact that such facts hold a precious payload of promise for us. First, the very fact that Christ already triumphed over sin while in His earthly body, and resurrected, is an assurance that it will happen for those who have received baptism (as part of a complete born again experience). It is not as if the promise was given with no sign, or confirmation, of the promise. It is not as though we had, and have, no example. Jesus lived a perfect example for us, and showed us how it is done. There are several precious promises nested in the resurrection. The concept of Christ being our “first fruits”, which is an agrarian, or farming concept. Also, the concept that “Jesus is our forerunner”, which is a nautical (having to do with boats and water) phrase.

Please allow a quick and brief digression as we draw a powerful parallel, while we are here. Notice the Scriptures give a future promise of eternal life, and the resurrection from the dead, (as recorded in Romans 6:5) to those who receive water baptism. Notice that eternal life, and the resurrection, are also promised to those who have received the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11). New Birth of the water AND Spirit are repeatedly linked to one complete conversion experience (John 3:3-8). Here we see that the same promises are offered for being baptized, as with receiving God's Spirit, in a sense linking the two experiences. OK...back to our topic.

Romans 6:9 speaks of a parallel between how Christ raised from the dead to newness of life, while being baptized we come out of the water to live in newness of life here on Earth. Romans 6 is stressing the dramatic change in life, and lifestyle, after one is baptized, by paralleling such to the dramatic change that Jesus Christ experienced in His resurrection. There was a marked difference before Christ's death, and after Christ arose from the dead. The baptized person has a new start in life, and is new, as he has been re-born. Romans 6 is telling us that



this drastic change happens at the point of baptism. Not before, nor after. One may experience blessings, and marvelous experiences, in God, at repentance, etc. but that is separate from what powerfully happens at the point of baptism. Romans chapter 6 is NOT telling us that baptism is nothing and does nothing. Baptism does quite a lot! Quite a lot happens at baptism. Colossians 2:12 mentions that we are risen with Christ in baptism. Notice the term “are”. This word is stressing the fact that things “are” happening at the point of baptism. We are identifying [action/ happening] with Christ. We are “with”, or in union, with Christ. This is different than our status before baptism. Before, we were not truly with Him, Biblically speaking. In baptism we get buried. That is doing something. But, God is merciful and does not leave it at that. In baptism we “rise”. When a person rises, he is doing something. A change is happening.

“Therefore, we have been buried with Him through immersion into death , in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4 NASB). We have been buried with Him in immersion, and resurrected to walk in newness of life. We bury the old man, and a new one is raised who walks in a different life. That is the essence of what it means to be “born again.” “For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection” (Romans 6:5 NASB)

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“...it relates the believer to Christ's redemptive action.” “...it entails an end (“death”) to the life of estrangement from God, and the beginning of life in Christ” “Baptism to Christ is for life after the pattern of Christ's dying to sin and rising for righteousness.”

So, we have seen how that baptism not only cuts off the: sin, old actions, and the old nature which causes those actions, but it provides a new nature which helps one please God, by living life in a new godly manner. As a result of all that happens in water baptism, fellowship, and union with God, is restored to the New Covenant believer. There is no substitute for all of these occurrences.

**6. We put on Christ in Baptism** Galatians 3:27. Consider that Christ is, then, over and around us. As such, we are “in Christ”. We cannot be “in Christ” without having been baptized. Galatians 3:27 NLT “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” When we are water baptized we get into Christ, or we put on Christ. (Side Note: When we are baptized of the Holy Ghost, Christ gets into us. No one enters into Christ by making a profession of “accepting Jesus into his heart.” This is purely man-made perversion of the gospel (Galatians 1:6-10). Keep in mind that the “Spirit of Christ” is synonymous with the phrase “Holy Ghost”. When we receive God's Spirit (i.e. Holy Ghost) we receive Christ.)

We are inducted into Christ's body by and through immersion. (So we are both collectively in the body of Christ, and in Christ, Himself).

Our union with Christ occurs in the likeness of His death (baptism) - not before, not after – IN! (Romans 6) Paul says so too (Romans 6). The baptismal act is not a supposed symbol of what has already taken place. These Scriptures tell us that one actually put's on Christ in/by the baptismal act.

We are “with” or “in union with Christ”, whereas we were not before baptism. We are “at one with”, after the atonement that is provided through baptism. It makes sense that since sin is removed (see number 2 above), which was the original reason for the separation from God, now we are made back in fellowship with God, just as Adam and Eve had fellowship with God prior to the separation by sin. So, we are in “fellowship with” Christ, Himself, now. We are “with”, or in union with Christ. Before, we were not truly “with” Him, Biblically speaking. “For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection” (Romans 6:5 NASB)

**7. As a final step of conversion, in baptism, we are born again.** Keep in mind that in John 3:3, Jesus narrowly defines the born again experience as being composed of just two factors: 1. born of water, meaning water baptism, and born of Spirit, meaning the infilling of the Holy Spirit/ Ghost. As such, if one has already received the Holy Spirit/ Ghost, the moment, one is Biblically water baptized, he is by definition, born again.

**8. At water baptism (as a final step of conversion) “Born Again” benefits belong to and are available to the baptized party:** We are now part of the church or the body of Christ (In conjunction with the other conversion steps). Acts 2:41 speaks of 3000 being added to the church. Baptism was a part of the process of one becoming a part of the body of Christ. As a part of the church we have all the promises, benefits and advantages that the church has available. We have peace, love and joy in the Holy Ghost, as a born again benefit. The fruit of the Spirit begins to be manifest. Immediately, being born again will make a difference in one's everyday life. He is saying that if we



have been baptized, that we are now dead to sin, and can now live in newness of life. Another privilege is the ability to repent on a daily basis, and confess our sins, and receive forgiveness of sins on a daily basis, and be a candidate to go to heaven if we die. If we do not die, we may go in the Rapture, or in the resurrection with Jesus. Roman 6:5 “if we have been planted [baptized] in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.” v9 “We believe that if we are dead with Christ we shall also live with Christ”.

Baptism gives a share in the benefits of Christ’s atoning death (Romans 6:1-11, and other scriptures).

**9. Baptism, discipleship, and Christianity** - We could say that there is a close relationship between baptism, discipleship, and being a Christian, by Biblical definition. For example, Jesus said if they continue in His Word, then they are His disciple indeed (John 8:31). Not the least of His commands was regarding being water baptized. So, when one is water baptized, he is properly continuing in Christ's Word and commands, and can then be considered a disciple indeed. It is said that FF Bruce advocated that there were not any Christians who had not been baptized. Wesley's Explanatory Notes regarding Mark 16:16 says “Every one that believed was baptized.” According to Norman Shepherd in his book *The Call of Grace*, “A sinner is not really ‘converted’ until he is baptized...[Covenantally], Christians are those who have been baptized. Unbelievers are those who have not been baptized”. Historically many scholars taught that one became a Christian by water baptism.

Some scholars have connected discipleship with baptism. They say one cannot be a disciple without being baptized. Virtually all scholars and theologians (until Zwingli, in about 1600 AD) taught that baptism was an essential part of salvation/ conversion, or that one could not be saved/ converted without being baptized.

**10. In the water baptism act we are obeying various Scriptural commands:** Matthew 28:19 contains pertinent commands: A. go and baptize, and B. make disciples, and teach. Of course, in order for folks to obey Christ's command to baptize, and make disciples someone has to obey, be baptized, and become a disciple. If it is true that one cannot be a New Testament or New Covenant disciple without being baptized, then in order to obey this command, one must be baptized. Acts 2:38 commands baptism. The baptized party becomes “obedient to the gospel”, and “obedience to the faith” (2 Thessalonians 1:8; Romans 1:5; 16:26; John 3:36, and other scriptures)

**11. In the event, a person has not yet received the Holy Ghost, baptism prepares a person to receive God's Spirit.** This is a historical viewpoint that many theologians have held for hundreds of years. This concept may have developed from observing the times that the scripture speaks of baptism preceeding one receiving the Holy Spirit, such as is found in Acts 1:5; 9:17; 19:5-6; etc.. Baptism also appears in the Scriptural sequence prior to receiving the Holy Spirit in, for example, in Acts 2:38. Perhaps, two more reasons that water baptism helps to prepare one to receive the Holy Ghost is as follows. The Bible says that God gives the Holy Ghost to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32; Hebrews 5:9). Perhaps, obediently receiving water baptism helps qualify one through such obedience, to receive the Holy Ghost. Also, due to the fact that obediently receiving water baptism washes one's sins away, may also help to prepare one to receive God's Spirit. When one obediently receives water baptism, this seems to help fulfill the obedience prerequisite hinted at in Acts 5:32, and Hebrews 5:9.

However, there are Scriptural examples in which people received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized. As such it does not seem prudent to assert that one absolutely must be baptized before one receives the Holy Ghost.

**12. The baptized party has a new status and identity.** In conjunction with the other steps of conversion, to be baptized is to be born anew (born again status) and conveys a new status and identity. We can be identified as Born Again before the Lord and His people John 3:5. Acts 2:41 speaks of baptism and then makes it known that over 3000 were added to the church. In context, we know they obeyed the full and Original Salvation Plan. So, we know they had fully been converted according to Acts 2:38, in order to be “added to the church.” “Added to the church” is another way to say they were: “converted”, “saved”, “born again.” As such their new status and identity is: “converted”, “saved”, “born again”, and “added to the church”, the “bride” of Christ. At that point we are considered “a child of God”, we are “kings and priests” (Revelation 1:6).

We were out of the covenant, but at the point of water baptism, we are in the covenant.

We are not saved to be alone, but we are baptized into a body, or group. The body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27; Galatians 3:27. We are not alone, but in union with Christ, Himself, as mentioned earlier in the list. Again,

all of this is further evidence of a new status.

Ephesians 2:19 “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God”. The Ephesians (and by extension our) status and identity before conversion was “strangers and foreigners”, “aliens” v12, but after conversion (including water baptism) they are now identified as “fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” v19, part of the “commonweath of Israel”. After conversion (including baptism) we are part of the covenant community. We were not a people, but now we are a people of God 1 Peter 2:10. We are in the family of God. We are the children of God. We are “a kingdom” Revelation 1:6. Upon conversion we become part of the Kingdom of God. We also become “a spiritual house” 1 Peter 2:5.

If we are Christ's, we are Abraham's seed. Galations 3:29 “And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

13. **Baptism: a Sign, Seal, and Covenant Token** Romans 4:11, Genesis 17:10ff. Unfortunately, this has been used by some to diminish, or even do away with baptism. However, in verse 11, notice Abraham was to circumcise himself, and THEN it was a sign. It was not a case in which he did not circumcise himself, and dismissed it as a meaningless, worthless, game token. Circumcision was a serious matter. Without it one was “cut-off” (verse 14). God almost killed Moses over not circumcising his son. Baptism IS the sign, as circumcision was the sign; it was not a sign of something else. In a positive sense, all present, can see a baptism (visible sign), which among other things is visible evidence of the baptized party's faith (like Lydia Acts 16:15), and the baptized party can remember back to the baptismal event, as a source of strength in the midst of inevitable struggles. Without baptism, one has NOT “sealed” the deal with God, and is not yet in covenant; as such there is NO sign, nor token of a covenant that is NOT yet in place.

14. **At baptism, Divine action takes place.** Sins are certainly absolved by God, and in the event of baptism being the final step in conversion, the person baptized is divinely justified and saved from perdition/ hell. Baptism is a divine legal act of justification (1 Corinthians 6:11). Not to be confused with “legalism”. God honors the obedience of both the baptizer and the one being baptized, and God honors His own Word, when at baptism, God absolves sin etc. What happened in the: physical, temporal, natural, finite, has a corresponding spiritual and infinite action. There is a causal relationship between the finite and the Infinite action.

15. **Sanctification** 1 Corinthians 6:11

16. **The baptized party gets a change in Lordship, and ownership.** (Colossians 1:12-14 speaks of conversion)

In covenant, converted and born-again -

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“Luke's understanding of Christian baptism appears in Acts 2:38. Baptism is conversion-baptism...signifying to whom he belongs (cf James 2:7)...” [As you can see from the above reference, baptism was a conversion. It was a component of being born again. A significance of this is that it changed to whom the baptized person belonged.] (For more regarding the issue of a change of Lordship and ownership, see the section of this writing titled “What Does the phrase, 'in the name', contained in Matthew 28:19, Mean?” Particularly, look for the phrase “Hellenistic commercial language”)

17. **At baptism the baptized party crosses the waters to safety** 1 Corinthians 10:1ff; 1 Peter 3:19-21, Baptism is not merely a bath of cleansing, but it is also a crossing of the waters into safety: 1 Corinthians 10:1f; 1 Peter 3:19-21. (Ephesians 2:4-5 this alludes to baptism). For example, Dueteronomy 27:9 describes that the Israelites were crossing Jordon and it says “**This day they became people of God**” Type Baptism = become covenant people. Crossed over into promise.

18. **God's grace is manifest in baptism.**

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Regarding water baptism and the verse found in 1 Corinthians 1:14, “is an embodiment of the gospel of grace and the supreme occasion for confessing it, hence the climactic point of the restoration of relations between God and the repentant sinner.

Additionally, in as much as water baptism is part of the conversion experience, it could be said that anything that Conversion (as a whole) does or brings, is the same as what water baptism as a part of the whole conversion package brings (as long as one has the full conversion experience, and not just a part or piece of it.) This concept can expand the above list considerably. If one cannot be considered converted unless they have also been baptized, then baptism and conversion are inextricably linked.

After reviewing this writing, it should be abundantly clear, that conversion is more, and involves more, than: repeating a few words, shaking a preacher's hand, or signing a church membership roll. One cannot be saved before the above listed, immersion related events, occur.

Please do not accept the lie that nothing happens at the point of receiving water baptism. Nor that baptism is just so people can see that you were already regenerated/ converted at some undefined point in the past.

Those who assert that one can be saved before or without immersion, are also saying that we can be saved before, and without, the things listed above and in this chapter. **This is of course, impossible!** For example, how can one be saved without being “born again”? How can one be admitted to heaven without having been converted and regenerated? How can one go to heaven without becoming part of the church, the body of Christ, and the bride of Christ? How can one be saved without becoming IN Christ, and in covenant? How can one be “saved” before they are “saved” (Mark 16:16a)? How can we possibly be saved before our sins are washed away and off of our souls in water baptism? These are all included among the things which actually happen, change and occur in water baptism. These are all immersion related events. These considerations are huge!

Imagine a public survey among professing Christians in the general population, which asks questions such as the following: “Can one be saved without being born again?” “Can one be saved without being converted and regenerated?” “Can one be saved without entering into: 1. Christ, 2. the body of Christ, 3. the church, 4. the bride of Christ, 5. covenant with God?” Are people allowed to eternally live in heaven without sins being expunged from their souls?” “Can we be saved before Jesus Christ's name is called upon us?”

**Can one be saved outside the Kingdom of God? Can one be saved outside the body of Christ? Water baptism is the way into the body of Christ. Considering these realities, can anyone biblically believe that someone is saved and going to heaven without being water baptized?**

Most Christians know on face value that this is not possible. Most instinctively know that salvation is not possible without these things/ provisions.

Yet, if the same people were asked at the end of the survey, if they believed people could go to heaven, without being water baptized, the majority would probably say “yes”, that they believe people can go to heaven without being water baptized.

We have just shined a large virtual spotlight on a popular, and modern era contradiction. As we have seen, the Bible clearly declares **50 plus** things which happen, change, and occur at the point of water baptism. **Among which are: regeneration, conversion, new birth, and conveyance into: Christ, the church, the bride of Christ, and covenant. We cannot: 1. adhere to the fact that the things just covered, actually happen in immersion 2. affirm that it is NOT possible to go to heaven unless these things have happened, AND YET assert that 3. immersion is not necessary for eternal admittance to heaven.** The person who asserts that all three of these points are true is terribly contradicting himself. Not to speak of the eternal jeopardy such a viewpoint can place one's self, and others in.

For nearly 2000 years, everyone knew that **water baptism was necessary in order to become: saved, regenerated, converted, born again, and in covenant with God, etcetera.** People knew that water baptism was “salvific”, meaning that it has saving power (yes, water baptism is part of what saves you). Such biblically sound knowledge was ubiquitous. It was common knowledge for the first sixteen centuries of the Christian church. Think of it this way. If someone in the 13<sup>th</sup> century were quized as to whether, it was possible to be saved without immersion, (if they could have reached forward to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and borrowed a modern colloquialism) they would

have responded, “Duh! Everyone knows we cannot be saved without being water baptized!”.

Yet, in our modern culture, political correctness is more important than biblical facts. If the facts are uncomfortable, modern culture simply changes the definitions, and meanings, to fix their problem. In so doing, we make “lies our refuge”. Isaiah 28:15 warns about the non viability of this option. Modern Christianity has largely chosen to go with the flow, instead of adhering to the bible on this immersion subject. They rationalize the decision to make lies a refuge, by factors such as it being more profitable, palatable, popular, and causing less friction. They placate their conscience, and puff up their ego, concerning this decision, by asserting that they are more intellectual, aradight, and enlightened, than prior generations. The bible fortold that this would happen. It says, “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22), In another place it says, “understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm” (1 Timothy 1:7), and later it says, “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Timothy 3:17). It is no secret that modern perveyers of lies and error reflect on the static wisdom of the ages with disdain. 1 Corinthians 2:14 describes their actions like this...“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Please, reader, do not follow after such people's folly.

There are probably more like 70+ happenings displayed in the above material. This author did not go to the extent to number all of them. Predictably, critics will not accept the “70+” number. Knowing this, this author cut many off the numbered list, and dropped the number down to 50+. Even so. Many critics will still not accept the 50+ number. One thing is sure though. Even if there are 40 left after a disbelieving critic is done, that's still 40, instead of the lie that professing Christianity is selling on a daily basis. “What is that lie?”, one asks. That water baptism is optional. That nothing really happens at the point of water baptism. That water baptism is just a meaningless, optional, ceremony. We have just seen these notions are rediculous.

Will you get biblically baptized today?

Author: K e n B e d w e l l

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